



General Assembly

January Session, 2003

***Raised Bill No. 1076***

LCO No. 3828

Referred to Committee on Higher Education and Employment  
Advancement

Introduced by:  
(HED)

***AN ACT ADDRESSING THE SHORTAGE OF NURSES,  
PHARMACISTS, ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS, DENTAL  
HYGIENISTS AND DENTAL ASSISTANTS.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General  
Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a  
2 Connecticut nursing, pharmacy and allied health profession incentive  
3 program administered by the Department of Higher Education.

4 (b) Within available appropriations, the program shall provide  
5 grants to nursing, pharmacy and allied health students (1) in nursing,  
6 pharmacy or allied health education programs at any institution of  
7 higher education approved by the Board of Governors of Higher  
8 Education or at any regional vocational-technical school, or (2)  
9 completing the requirements of such a nursing, pharmacy or allied  
10 health education program as a graduate student, provided such  
11 student received a grant pursuant to this section for one year at the  
12 undergraduate level. No student shall receive a grant under the  
13 program for more than two years. Maximum grants shall not exceed  
14 five thousand dollars per year. The department shall ensure that at

15 least ten per cent of the grant recipients are minority students who  
16 transfer from a Connecticut regional community-technical college.

17 (c) A student who received grants under subsection (b) of this  
18 section, and who is employed as a nurse, pharmacist or allied health  
19 professional in an acute care hospital in this state, a health care  
20 institution in this state, as defined in subsection (a) of section 19a-490  
21 of the general statutes, or a pharmacy in this state, as defined in section  
22 20-571 of the general statutes, shall be eligible for reimbursement of  
23 federal or state educational loans up to a maximum of two thousand  
24 five hundred dollars per year for up to four years of such service.

25 (d) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsections (b) and (c) of this  
26 section, the combined dollar value of grants and loan reimbursements  
27 shall not exceed twenty thousand dollars per student.

28 (e) For the fiscal years ending June 30, 2003, and June 30, 2004, the  
29 Department of Higher Education may use up to two per cent of the  
30 funds appropriated for purposes of this section for program  
31 administration, promotion, recruitment and retention activities that are  
32 designed to increase the number of students pursuing nursing,  
33 pharmacy and allied health careers at public institutions of higher  
34 education or regional vocational-technical schools.

35 (f) Not later than January 1, 2005, the Commissioner of Higher  
36 Education shall submit a status report, in accordance with the  
37 provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, on the establishment  
38 and operation of the incentive program authorized under this section  
39 to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having  
40 cognizance of matters relating to education, public health and higher  
41 education and employment advancement.

42 (g) For purposes of this section, "allied health education program"  
43 means a program that qualifies a student to work as an allied health  
44 professional, and "allied health professional" means a professional or  
45 paraprofessional who is qualified by special training, education, skills

46 and experience in providing health care, treatment and diagnostic  
47 services under the supervision of or in collaboration with a licensed  
48 practitioner of a health profession, and includes, but is not limited to,  
49 licensed nurses, certified nurse assistants, home health aides, physician  
50 assistants, technologists, therapists and technicians.

51 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a  
52 Connecticut dental hygienist and dental assistant incentive program  
53 administered by the Department of Higher Education.

54 (b) Within available appropriations, the program shall provide  
55 grants to students enrolled in dental hygienist or dental assistant  
56 education programs at any institution of higher education approved  
57 by the Board of Governors of Higher Education or at any regional  
58 vocational-technical school. No student shall receive a grant under the  
59 program for more than two years. Maximum grants shall not exceed  
60 five thousand dollars per year. The department shall ensure that at  
61 least ten per cent of the grant recipients are minority students.

62 (c) Beginning January 1, 2006, a student who received grants under  
63 subsection (b) of this section, and who is employed as a dental  
64 hygienist or dental assistant at a public health facility in this state, as  
65 defined in section 20-126l of the general statutes shall be eligible for  
66 reimbursement of federal or state educational loans up to a maximum  
67 of two thousand five hundred dollars per year for up to four years of  
68 such service.

69 (d) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsections (b) and (c) of this  
70 section, the combined dollar value of grants and loan reimbursements  
71 shall not exceed twenty thousand dollars per student.

72 (e) For the fiscal years ending June 30, 2003, and June 30, 2004, the  
73 Department of Higher Education may use up to two per cent of the  
74 funds appropriated for purposes of this section for program  
75 administration, promotion, recruitment and retention activities that are  
76 designed to increase the number of students pursuing careers as dental

77 hygienists and dental assistants at public institutions of higher  
78 education or regional vocational-technical schools.

79 (f) Not later than January 1, 2005, the Commissioner of Higher  
80 Education shall submit a status report, in accordance with the  
81 provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes, on the establishment  
82 and operation of the incentive program authorized under this section  
83 to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having  
84 cognizance of matters relating to education, public health and higher  
85 education and employment advancement.

86 (g) For purposes of this section, "dental hygienist education  
87 program" includes any program of study or courses taken to earn a  
88 degree or license as a dental hygienist or to upgrade knowledge and  
89 skills as a dental hygienist, and "dental assistant education program"  
90 includes any program of study or courses taken to earn a certificate as  
91 a dental assistant or to upgrade knowledge and skills as a dental  
92 assistant.

93 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) Within available  
94 appropriations, the Board of Governors of Higher Education, in  
95 consultation with the State Dental Commission established under  
96 section 20-103a of the general statutes, the Office of Workforce  
97 Competitiveness, the Commissioner of Public Health, the Labor  
98 Commissioner and the superintendent of the regional vocational-  
99 technical school system, shall:

100 (1) Review, evaluate and recommend improvements for degree and  
101 certification programs for the education and training of dental  
102 hygienists and dental assistants in order to increase the number of  
103 students who enter and successfully complete such programs;

104 (2) Develop an initiative to expand dental hygienist and dental  
105 assistant academic programs to promote increased enrollment and  
106 retention in such programs;

107 (3) Recruit students for dental hygienist and dental assistant  
108 academic programs who have traditionally been underrepresented in  
109 such occupations; and

110 (4) Explore distance learning and articulation agreements to  
111 facilitate degree or certification enhancement activities for students  
112 enrolled in dental hygienist and dental assistant academic programs.

113 Sec. 4. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) Within available  
114 appropriations, the Department of Higher Education shall coordinate  
115 with the Board of Trustees of the Community-Technical Colleges to  
116 ensure that credit courses in radiological technology and laboratory  
117 technology are offered in the state on a regional basis.

118 (b) Within available appropriations, the Board of Trustees of the  
119 Community-Technical Colleges shall offer weekend and evening  
120 courses in radiological technology and laboratory technology.

121 (c) The Office of Workforce Competitiveness, in conjunction with  
122 the Labor Department, shall develop a strategy to encourage hospitals  
123 in this state to establish hospital-based training programs in the areas  
124 of radiological technology and laboratory technology which focus on  
125 transitioning incumbent health care employees into such areas.

This act shall take effect as follows:	
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>
Sec. 3	<i>from passage</i>
Sec. 4	<i>from passage</i>

***Statement of Purpose:***

To provide incentives to encourage students to enter the fields of nursing, pharmacy, allied health, dental hygiene, dental assistance, radiological technology and laboratory technology.

*[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]*

